

**BEST AVAILABLE COPY****Amendments to the Claims:**

The following listing of claims replaces all previous versions of claims in the application:

1. (currently amended) A method for facilitating supplier auditing functions in a communications network environment, comprising:
  - receiving a request from a user system of an enterprise system to initiate an activity, said activity including scheduling an audit for performing an initial or ongoing qualification of an existing or prospective trading partner of the enterprise system;
  - assigning an access level to a requester at the user system with respect to at least one database;
  - said enterprise system retrieving data from the at least one database, said data corresponding to said ~~request~~ activity selected; and
  - transmitting said data to said user system based upon the access level;
  - wherein said scheduling said audit includes:
    - entering supplier data relating to the trading partner into a schedule form;
    - entering requester information into said schedule form;
    - selecting an auditor to perform said audit;
    - entering a purpose for said audit;
    - entering a time frame for performing said audit; and
    - distributing a completed schedule form to at least one entity; ~~and~~
  - wherein further said enterprise system includes a quality information network application for executing activity options that include the activity requested by the user system.
2. (withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein said activity includes assessing a supplier record for determining a need to schedule a supplier audit.
3. (withdrawn) The method of claim 2, wherein said assessing said supplier record includes reviewing:
  - past audit activity;
  - date of last audit; and

results of past audits.

4-5. (canceled)

6. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said distributing said completed schedule form is automatically performed by said quality information network application via a distribution list.

7. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said distributing said completed schedule form is manually performed by said requester via a distribution list provided by said requester.

8. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said requester is a divisional user comprising at least one of an engineer and developer of the enterprise system, the divisional user requesting an audit of a trading partner that corresponds with an engineering or developer group to which the divisional user belongs.

9. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said selecting said auditor by said requester includes selection criteria including:

- geographic location of site to be audited;
- auditing skills possessed by said auditor;
- a commodity subject to said audit; and
- auditor pre-qualification data.

10. (previously presented) The method of claim 9, further comprising:  
automatically transmitting a notice to said auditor;  
receiving a response to the notice from said auditor by said requester, wherein said response is either a confirmation notice or a rejection notice.

11. (original) The method of claim 10, wherein said requester initiates a second auditor selection, based upon receiving said rejection notice.

12. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said entering said time frame for performing said audit includes:

entering a date planned for said audit; and  
entering a quarter planned for said audit.

13. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said activity includes viewing a scheduled audit.

14. (original) The method of claim 13, wherein said viewing said scheduled audit includes viewing by categories, said categories including:

all audits;  
completed audits; and  
planned audits.

15. (previously presented) The method of claim 13, wherein said viewing said scheduled audit includes viewing by:

trading partner;  
region;  
quarter by region by commodity;  
year by quarter;  
product category;  
requester;  
auditor;  
organization; and  
site owner.

16. (withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein said activity includes providing audit reporting data by an auditor.

17. (withdrawn) The method of claim 16, wherein said providing said audit reporting

data includes:

- providing audit test results;
- providing audit analysis results;
- providing data pertaining to deficiencies in meeting industry standards;
- providing data pertaining to deficiencies in meeting government standards;
- providing data pertaining to deficiencies in meeting proprietor-imposed standards;
- attaching said audit reporting data to a corresponding audit schedule;
- transmitting said audit reporting data and said corresponding audit schedule to a designated entity; and
- proposing corrective actions.

18. (withdrawn) The method of claim 17, wherein said transmitting said audit reporting data and said corresponding audit schedule is performed automatically by said quality information network application via a distribution list.

19. (withdrawn) The method of claim 17, wherein said transmitting said audit reporting data and said corresponding audit schedule is performed manually by said auditor via a distribution list provided by said auditor.

20. (withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein said activity includes viewing audit reports.

21. (withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein said activity includes viewing training data.

22. (withdrawn) The method of claim 21, wherein said training data includes:
- lectures;
  - seminars;
  - classes; and
  - resource materials.

23. (withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein said activity includes viewing executive summary reports.

24. (withdrawn) The method of claim 1, wherein said activity includes viewing reference data, said reference data including:

industry standards;  
government standards; and  
proprietor-imposed standards.

25. (currently amended) A method for facilitating supplier auditing functions in a communications network environment, comprising:

receiving a request from a first enterprise system to contact a web site maintained by a second enterprise system, the first enterprise system comprising a trading partner of the second enterprise system;

said second enterprise system authenticating a user ID and password of a user of said first enterprise system;

receiving a request from the first enterprise system to initiate an activity, said activity including viewing results of an audit performed on the trading partner by the second enterprise system;

assigning an access level to the first enterprise system with respect to at least one database;

said second enterprise system retrieving data corresponding to said request activity selected from the at least one database, said data including results of the audit; and

transmitting said data to said first enterprise system based upon the access level;

wherein said second enterprise system includes a quality information network application for executing activity options including the activity requested by the first enterprise system.

26. (withdrawn) The method of claim 25, further comprising:

replicating selected data fields of a database associated with said second enterprise system resulting from a request by said first enterprise to submit data into a supplier response

form, said request associated with a first of said activity options;  
providing access to said database;  
displaying said supplier response form;  
receiving response data from said first enterprise system, said response data provided in said supplier response form;  
storing said response data in said database; and  
associating said response data with an entity within said second enterprise system.

27. (withdrawn) The method of claim 26, wherein said entity is a division.

28. (withdrawn) The method of claim 26, wherein said entity is a commodity.

29. (withdrawn) The method of claim 26, further comprising:  
receiving an attached text file with said response data.

30. (withdrawn) The method of claim 26 wherein said associating said response data with said entity includes:  
sending a notification to said entity; and  
making said response data available to said entity.

31-32. (canceled)

33. (withdrawn) The method of claim 25, wherein said first enterprise system is a supplier.

34. (withdrawn) The method of claim 25, wherein said first enterprise system is a contract manufacturer.

35. (withdrawn) The method of claim 25, wherein said first enterprise system is a trading partner.

36. (currently amended) A system for facilitating supplier auditing functions in a communications network environment, comprising:

a host system including a web server, an applications server, and a database server;

a data storage device in communication with said host system;

quality information network software application being executed by said host system for implementing activities;

a firewall in communication with said host system;

a workstation; and

a computer network connecting the host system to the workstation; wherein the quality information network software application performs:

receiving a request from the workstation of an enterprise of the host system to initiate an activity, said activity including scheduling an audit for performing an initial or ongoing qualification of an existing or prospective trading partner of the enterprise;

assigning an access level to a requester at the workstation with respect to at least one database of the data storage device;

retrieving data from the at least one database~~data storage device~~, said data corresponding to said ~~request~~activity selected; and

transmitting said data to said workstation based upon the access level;

wherein said scheduling said audit includes:

entering supplier data relating to the trading partner into a schedule form;

entering requester information into said schedule form;

selecting an auditor to perform said audit;

entering a purpose for said audit;

entering a time frame for performing said audit; and

distributing a completed schedule form to at least one entity.

37. (previously presented) The system of claim 36, wherein said data storage device includes:

a reference database;

an audit schedule database;

an audit reports database;

an executive summary database; and

a supplier quality performance database relating to the trading partner.

38. (canceled)

39. (previously presented) The system of claim 36, wherein said computer network is the Internet.

40. (previously presented) The system of claim 36, wherein said computer network is an extranet.

41. (currently amended) A storage medium encoded with machine-readable computer program code for facilitating supplier auditing functions in a communications network environment, the storage medium including instructions for causing an enterprise system to implement a method comprising:

receiving a request from a user system associated with the enterprise system to initiate an activity, said activity including scheduling an audit for performing an initial or ongoing qualification of an existing or prospective trading partner of the enterprise system;

assigning an access level to a requester at the user system with respect to at least one database;

said enterprise system retrieving data from the at least one database, said data corresponding to said request~~activity selected~~; and

transmitting said data to said user system based upon the access level;

wherein said scheduling said audit includes:

entering supplier data relating to the trading partner into a schedule form;

entering requester information into said schedule form;

selecting an auditor to perform said audit;

entering a purpose for said audit;

entering a time frame for performing said audit; and

distributing a completed schedule form to at least one entity; and

wherein further said enterprise system includes a quality



information network application for executing activity options that includes the activity requested by the user system.

42. (withdrawn) The storage medium of claim 41, wherein said activity includes assessing a supplier record for determining a need to schedule a supplier audit.

43. (withdrawn) The storage medium of claim 42, wherein said assessing said supplier record includes reviewing:

- past audit activity;
- date of last audit; and
- results of past audits.

44-45. (canceled)

46. (previously presented) The storage medium of claim 41[5], wherein said distributing said completed schedule form is automatically performed by said quality information network application via a distribution list.

47. (previously presented) The storage medium of claim 41[5], wherein said distributing said completed schedule form is manually performed by said requester via a distribution list provided by said requester.

48. (previously presented) The storage medium of claim 41[5], wherein said requester is a divisional user comprising at least one of an engineer and developer of the enterprise system, the divisional user requesting an audit of a trading partner that corresponds with an engineering or developer group to which the divisional user belongs.

49. (previously presented) The storage medium of claim 41[5], wherein said selecting said auditor by said requester includes selection criteria including:

- geographic location of site to be audited;
- auditing skills possessed by said auditor;

a commodity subject to said audit; and  
auditor pre-qualification data.

50. (previously presented) The storage medium of claim 49, further comprising instructions for causing a computer to implement:  
automatically transmitting a notice to said auditor;  
receiving a response to the notice from said auditor by said requester, wherein said response is either a confirmation notice or a rejection notice.

51. (original) The storage medium of claim 50, wherein said requester initiates a second auditor selection, based upon receiving said rejection notice.

52. (previously presented) The storage medium of claim 41[5], wherein said entering said time frame for performing said audit includes:  
entering a date planned for said audit; and  
entering a quarter planned for said audit.

53. (original) The storage medium of claim 41, wherein said activity includes viewing a scheduled audit.

54. (original) The storage medium of claim 53, wherein said viewing said scheduled audit includes viewing by categories, said categories including:  
all audits;  
completed audits; and  
planned audits.

55. (previously presented) The storage medium of claim 53, wherein said viewing said scheduled audit includes viewing by:  
trading partner;  
region;  
quarter by region by commodity;

year by quarter;  
product category;  
requester;  
auditor;  
organization; and  
site owner.

56. (withdrawn) The storage medium of claim 41, wherein said activity includes providing audit reporting data by an auditor.

57. (withdrawn) The storage medium of claim 56, wherein said providing said audit reporting data includes:

providing audit test results;  
providing audit analysis results;  
providing data pertaining to deficiencies in meeting industry standards;  
providing data pertaining to deficiencies in meeting government standards;  
providing data pertaining to deficiencies in meeting proprietor-imposed standards;  
attaching said audit reporting data to a corresponding audit schedule;  
transmitting said audit reporting data and said corresponding audit schedule to a designated entity; and  
proposing corrective actions.

58. (withdrawn) The storage medium of claim 57, wherein said transmitting said audit reporting data and said corresponding audit schedule is performed automatically by said quality information network application via a distribution list.

59. (withdrawn) The storage medium of claim 57, wherein said transmitting said audit reporting data and said corresponding audit schedule is performed manually by said auditor via a distribution list provided by said auditor.

60. (withdrawn) The storage medium of claim 41, wherein said activity includes

viewing audit reports.

61. (withdrawn) The storage medium of claim 41, wherein said activity includes viewing training data.

62. (withdrawn) The storage medium of claim 61, wherein said training data includes:  
lectures;  
seminars;  
classes; and  
resource materials.

63. (withdrawn) The storage medium of claim 41, wherein said activity includes viewing executive summary reports.

64. (withdrawn) The storage medium of claim 41, wherein said activity includes viewing reference data, said reference data including:  
industry standards;  
government standards; and  
proprietor-imposed standards.

65. (currently amended) A storage medium encoded with machine-readable computer program code for facilitating supplier auditing functions in a communications network environment, the storage medium including instructions for causing an enterprise system to implement a method comprising:

receiving a request from a first enterprise system to contact a web site maintained by a second enterprise system, the first enterprise system including a trading partner of the second enterprise system;

said second enterprise system authenticating a user ID and password of a user of said first enterprise system;

receiving a request from the first enterprise system to initiate an activity, said activity including reviewing results of an audit performed on the trading partner by the second enterprise;

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assigning an access level to a requester at the first enterprise system with respect to at least one database;

said second enterprise system retrieving data corresponding to said request activity selected from the at least one database, said data including the results of the audit; and

transmitting said data to said first enterprise system based upon the access level;

wherein said second enterprise system includes a quality information network application for executing activity options that includes the activity requested by the first enterprise system.

66. (withdrawn) The storage medium of claim 65, further comprising instructions for causing a computer to implement:

replicating selected data fields of a database associated with said second enterprise system resulting from a request by said first enterprise to submit data into a supplier response form, said request associated with a first of said activity options;

providing access to said database;

displaying said supplier response form;

receiving response data from said first enterprise system, said response data provided in said supplier response form;

storing said response data in said database; and

associating said response data with an entity within said second enterprise system.

67. (withdrawn) The storage medium of claim 66, wherein said entity is a division.

68. (withdrawn) The storage medium of claim 66, wherein said entity is a commodity.

69. (withdrawn) The storage medium of claim 66, further comprising instructions for causing a computer to implement:

receiving an attached text file with said response data.

70. (withdrawn) The storage medium of claim 66 wherein said associating said response data with said entity includes:

sending a notification to said entity; and  
making said response data available to said entity.

71-72. (canceled)

73. (withdrawn) The storage medium of claim 65, wherein said first enterprise system is a supplier.

74. (withdrawn) The storage medium of claim 65, wherein said first enterprise system is a contract manufacturer.

75. (withdrawn) The storage medium of claim 65, wherein said first enterprise system is a trading partner.

76. (canceled)

77. (previously presented) The system of claim 36, wherein said distributing said completed schedule form is automatically performed by said quality information network application via a distribution list.

78. (previously presented) The system of claim 36, wherein said distributing said completed schedule form is manually performed by said requester via a distribution list provided by said requester.

79. (previously presented) The system of claim 36, wherein said requester is a divisional user comprising at least one of an engineer and developer of the enterprise system, the divisional user requesting an audit of a trading partner that corresponds with an engineering or developer group to which the divisional user belongs.

80. (previously presented) The system of claim 36 wherein said selecting said auditor by said requester includes selection criteria including:

geographic location of site to be audited;  
auditing skills possessed by said auditor;  
a commodity subject to said audit; and  
auditor pre-qualification data.

81. (previously presented) The system of claim 80, further comprising:  
automatically transmitting a notice to said auditor;  
receiving a response to the notice from said auditor by said requester, wherein said  
response is either a confirmation notice or a rejection notice.

82. (previously presented) The system of claim 81, wherein said requester initiates a  
second auditor selection, based upon receiving said rejection notice.